



GASCO Removal Action May 2004

NW NATURAL GAS WILL REMOVE SEDIMENT CONTAMINATION

Tar Cleanup is Second Portland Harbor Early Action Agreement

The U.S. EPA and Northwest Natural (NWN) recently signed a legal agreement called an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) to remove tar-laden sediment in the Willamette River next to the 35-acre GASCO site on NW St. Helens Road in Portland. Northwest Natural owns and operates the site.

Sediment along the riverbank and river bottom next to the GASCO site is visibly contaminated with tar

containing polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and benzene. EPA has determined that removing the tar is time critical, so work is scheduled to begin this summer.

The GASCO project is the second "early action" agreement within the Portland Harbor Superfund site and the first in-water removal of contamination.

Administrative Record Available for Review

The Administrative Record (AR) for the GASCO site is available for public review. The file includes the Action Memorandum, the Administrative Order on Consent, the Statement of Work and supporting documentation.

The AR is available at information repositories listed on the back page of this fact sheet or on the EPA website at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/ph/GASCO>

Please send your feedback on the Administrative Record **by June 15, 2004** to:

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(206) 553-1220 or e-mail: sheldrake.sean@epa.gov

Proposed Action Helps Achieve Three Objectives

The cleanup activities will include removing tar from the riverbank and Willamette River bottom sediment, disposing of the contaminated material off site at an approved hazardous waste facility, and placing a layer of clean material over the dredged surface. This proposed action will:

1. Clean up the GASCO tar body.
2. Reduce exposure risk for people and wildlife, protecting human health and the environment.
3. Reduce the likelihood of high-level contamination being carried downstream.

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How the GASCO Removal Fits in with the Portland Harbor Sediment Investigation

GASCO is located within the boundaries of the larger Portland Harbor Superfund site. Over the past 10 years, investigations by EPA and the Department of Environmental Quality have documented the presence of tar sediment in the river and along the riverbank. Cleaning up the tar-body at GASCO will help protect people and the environment by reducing the likelihood of contamination being released from the tar into the river while the harbor-wide sediment investigation is underway.

This early cleanup action is a positive step for Northwest Natural Gas. The company's willingness to begin performing cleanup work jump-starts the cleanup needed at the GASCO site.

Although the removal work this summer will not address all contamination at the site, it represents a big step forward. In addition to the removal of the tar-body in the river, Northwest Natural Gas has been working under a voluntary cleanup agreement with DEQ since 1994 to investigate and clean up contamination located upland on the facility.

Removing tar may reduce risk for people and wildlife

Trespassers, transients, recreational boaters and site workers have some potential to come into contamination from the site, especially during low water.

Many types of fish and wildlife can be potentially affected by coming in contact with the tar body, including fish, shellfish, other aquatic life, and waterfowl, especially fish-eating birds. People who catch and eat fish and wildlife from the contaminated area may also be exposed to hazardous substances through the food chain.

Next Steps

EPA has designated the GASCO removal work as a "time-critical action" which means that planning for the site cleanup work must be completed in less than six months. Here are the steps that are planned during the GASCO tar removal:

PLANNING - Spring 2004

- NWN will submit a draft removal action work plan to EPA within 30 days.
- NWN will take samples from the site to get information needed to plan the cleanup details.
- NWN will provide a project design for EPA approval.

CLEANUP - Summer/Fall 2004

- NWN will remove the contamination consistent with the plan and schedule approved by EPA.

FOLLOW-UP - 2004/2005

- NWN will provide EPA with a Removal Action Completion Report within 60-days after the cleanup is finished.
- NWN and EPA will begin to monitor the effectiveness of the cleanup.

How You Can Be Involved

You are invited to review the Administrative Record for GASCO and provide feedback to EPA. During the GASCO removal, EPA will:

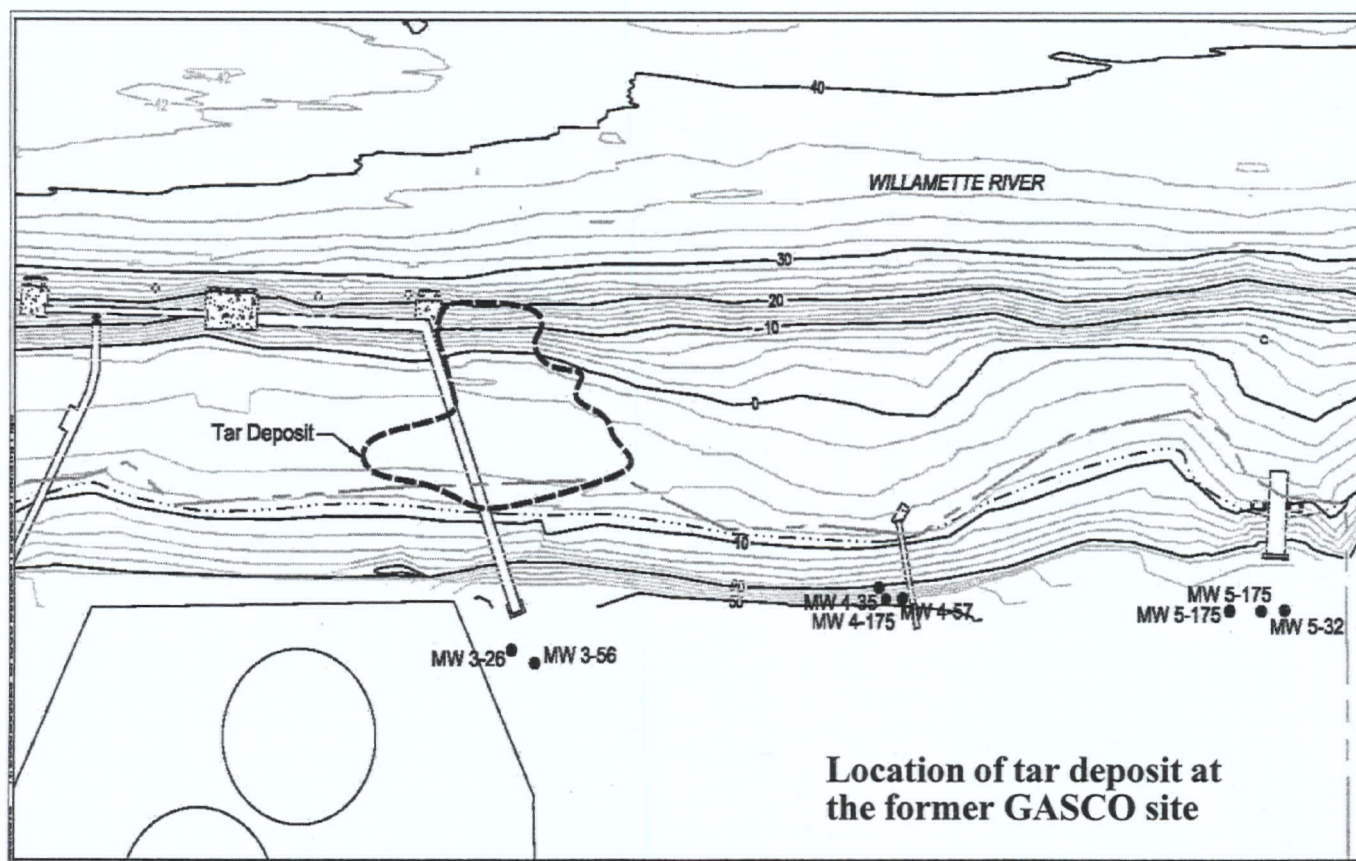
- Provide updates at monthly meetings of the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group
- Provide progress updates in the Portland Harbor quarterly newsletter
- Visit community groups and neighborhood associations when requested
- Keep the GASCO/Portland Harbor website updated with project information repositories

About the Site

GASCO (the former Portland Gas and Coke Company) built and operated an oil gasification plant on the site between 1913 and 1956. The site was originally about 85 acres, but over the past century portions of the facility have been sold or leased to other owners and operators. The present site encompasses about 35 acres.

From 1913 to 1941, waste and by-products from various gas production operations were discharged

to a stream channels to the Willamette River and low-lying areas of the GASCO site. From 1941 to 1956, wastewater effluent and tar stills were disposed of in settling ponds. About 30,000 cubic yards of tar waste had accumulated by the time the plant was shut down and the ponds were buried under 10 feet of fill in 1973. Portions of the site are currently used for natural gas storage by NW Natural and for bulk petroleum storage by a leaseholder.





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***GASCO REMOVAL
PORTLAND, OREGON
MAY 2004***

For More Information About GASCO

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Information is available at the following repository locations in Portland:

St. Johns Branch Library, Reference Desk,
7510 N. Charleston Ave.

Northwest Branch Library, Reference Desk,
2300 N.W. Thurman St.

Central Library, Reference Desk,
801 S.W. 10th Ave.

GASCO website: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/cleanup.nsf/ph/GASCO>



Alternative formats are available. To request reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities, please call Judy Smith. TTY users, please call 1-800-977-8339.